



Lincoln Business Watch

THE "NET"



Summer Issue

Crime Free Dollars: *A Larceny From Auto Awareness Program*

The citizens of Lincoln suffer approximately one million dollars in loss due to larceny from auto annually. Some of the most frequently targeted vehicles appear to be those owned by high school and college age people. In the spring of 2003 the Lincoln Police Crime Prevention Unit teamed up with AAA Insurance and the Crime Free Dollars program was initiated. How the program works :

1. Officers contact students at the six Lincoln public high schools and ask them to make sure their vehicles are locked and their valuables are either removed from the car or concealed;
2. The school parking lots are then randomly surveyed and the license numbers of the vehicles in compliance are recorded.
3. A drawing is then held for each high school and the student drawn is then awarded \$50 in cash provided by AAA Insurance. Including this years winners, AAA Insurance has paid out \$1150. This year's winner are:

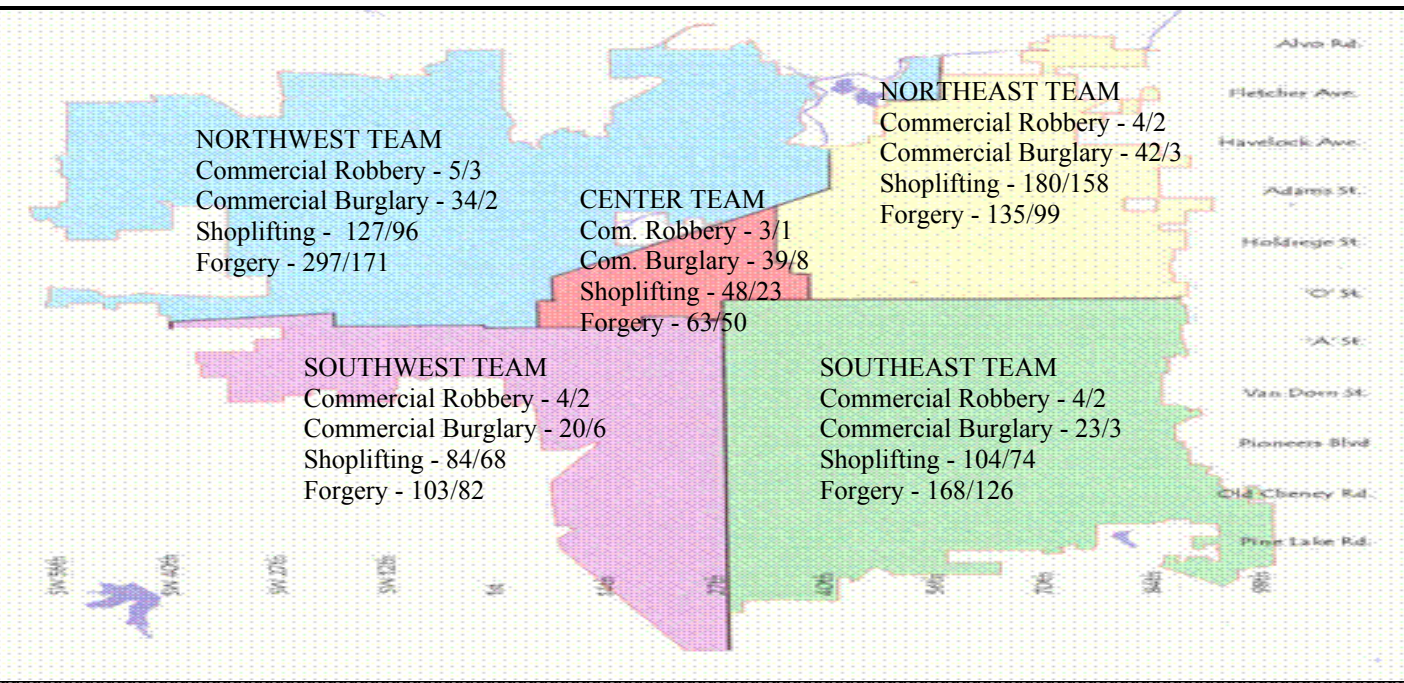
- East High School-Kristin Miller
- Lincoln High School-JayLynn Eitzmann
- North Star High School-Hoang Vo
- Northeast High School-Colt Buhr
- Southeast High School-Jess Pieper
- Southwest High School-Thomas Schmidt



Officer Jared Minary of the Crime Prevention Unit and AAA Office Manager Marilyn Muir.

CRIME TRENDS

Between 1-1-06 thru 5-31-06 the police department has handled 55,829 calls for service. The first number will be the number of reported incidents. The second number is how many incidents have been cleared with an arrest.



“The NET”

Lincoln Police Department
Crime Prevention Unit
575 S. 10th Street
Lincoln NE 68508



Return Service Requested

Vehicle Cloning: Look Twice! Does your vehicle have a twin?

Cloning is a popular topic these days...and not just in the scientific community. Vehicle cloning is a growing crime affecting consumers who purchase used vehicles. What unsuspecting buyers believe is a legitimate used car or truck could actually be a stolen vehicle. Cloning is a crime in which stolen vehicles assume the identity of non-stolen, legally owned, vehicles that are a similar make and model. By applying counterfeit labels, plates, stickers and titles to stolen vehicles, criminals can make them appear as if they are legitimate, legally cars and trucks. These criminals-many of whom participate in organized crime rings specializing in vehicle cloning schemes-then sell the stolen vehicles to unsuspecting consumers.

The result is that you have two or more vehicles that look exactly alike...at least by their identification documents and vehicle tags. The reality is that only one of them is a legitimate, legally owned vehicle. The rest are stolen and have been disguised to look like the legitimate one. Vehicle cloning is a highly lucrative crime. Estimated U.S. vehicle cloning profits exceed \$12 million annually, with criminals netting an average of \$30,000 per cloned vehicle.

Cloning is relatively easy and inexpensive to commit. For less than \$2,000, cloning criminals can use a computer, color printer, typewriter, barcode label printer, rotary tool and engraving pen to counterfeit a vehicle's identification numbers, stickers, labels and titles. Here's how it works. An individual will copy a VIN from a legally owned and documented vehicle sitting in a parking lot or car dealership, oftentimes high-value SUVs or luxury cars. The legitimate VIN is then used to create a counterfeit VIN tag, frequently multiple times. From there, thieves steal a similar vehicle as the legally owned one from the parking lot, and replace the stolen vehicle's tag with the counterfeit one containing the non-stolen vehicle's identification numbers. Bearing a counterfeit tag, the stolen vehicle is now a "clone" of the legitimate one and can be titled without detection by government agencies. To the government, the stolen vehicle looks just like the one from the parking lot...at least on paper.

To complete this scam, criminals create counterfeit ownership documents for the cloned vehicle or obtain the ownership documentation under false pretenses, such as identity theft. They use this phony documentation to sell the stolen vehicle to an innocent purchaser, frequently at fair-or below market value.

Prevent this from Happening to you: You can keep a look out for look-alike cloned vehicles when shopping for a used car or truck. The National Insurance Crime Bureau, a non-profit organization that creates insurance fraud and theft solution through information analysis, criminal investigation support, training and public awareness, offers these tips to help you avoid becoming a vehicle cloning crime victim.

- ≈ Check the vehicle's VIN with appropriate government agencies and your state bureau of motor vehicles.
- ≈ Analyze the ownership patter for any new or late model vehicle with no lien holder.
- ≈ Have a private company conduct a vehicle history search.
- ≈ Trust your instinct: If a used vehicle deal sounds too good to be true, walk away.

If you suspect insurance fraud or vehicle theft call the National Insurance Crime Bureau (NICB) toll free at 1-800-835-6422 or check out their web site at www.nicb.org. NICB 1111 E. Touhy Ave., Ste 400. Des Plaines, IL 60018

Information for this article was provided by Vern Fougherty of the NICB 515-256-0989